

James Grossberg <jgrossberg@me.com>



To:

• **City Council**

Mon 6/12/2023 6:11 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- **DO NOT CLICK** on links or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear Mayor and City Council members:

During her term as City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis has launched an unprecedented assault on government transparency. Here are some of the most egregious examples:

1. She apparently played an integral role in the City's attempt in January of last year to blatantly violate the Brown Act and intimidate Council member Weiss from exercising his First Amendment rights regarding a Laguna Beach Police Employees' Association survey.
2. As detailed in my May 16, 2023 letter to City Council, the City Manager and her subordinates continue to flagrantly violate the California Public Records Act and other laws by, among other actions, (A) withholding, without explanation for now six months, obviously non-exempt telephone records regarding the City Manager's Nov. 16, 2022 traffic incident requested by Michele Monda and even ignoring correspondence containing binding legal authority requiring disclosure; (B) abruptly discontinuing—without explanation—the release of law firm billing amounts the City had previously agreed to disclose; (C) refusing to allow even City Council member Weiss to review public records in the matter; and (D) apparently attempting to intimidate Councilman Weiss yet again by a frivolous threat of legal action against him.
3. The City Manager has refused to disclose her level of involvement—which likely constitutes an illegal conflict of interest—in responding to Ms. Monda's record requests.
4. In reaction to those requests, the City Manager used her official speaking time during a City Council meeting to launch a diatribe against her and three other City residents, including factually baseless and likely defamatory accusations against the residents that may well subject both the City Manager and the City to liability under federal civil rights statutes.

5. The City manager appears to have illegally used City funds to produce and disseminate a highly deceptive PR video presentation regarding the Nov. 16 traffic incident, the sole purpose of which was to salvage Ms. Dupuis' personal reputation.
6. The City Attorney gave an improper and illegal instruction to City Council members, apparently with the approval of the City Manager, that members may not disclose publicly anything learned in closed session, contradicting the Brown Act, which prohibits disclosure only of "confidential" information learned in closed session.
7. In an unprecedented move, the City Manager now requires public statements by City officials, including extremely time-sensitive emergency alerts by the Police or Fire department regarding immediate threats to public safety, to obtain the prior approval of and be subject to editing by the City Manager's PR assistant, which already has led to significant delays and misstatements in such announcements that have threatened the public's health and safety.
8. In yet another unprecedented move, the City manager has sharply curtailed City Council members' ability to obtain information from City staff.
9. The City Manager omitted from an April 2022 staff report to Council critical facts regarding the attempted sale of the library and disregarded other critical protocols in the course of the matter.
10. Although it appears that a City press release regarding the apparent vandalism of the City Manager's home in early February inaccurately described the substance deposited on her property as feces or sewage rather than fish emulsion fertilizer, the City has never corrected the inaccuracy nor, now four months after the incident, given any update to the public on the status of its investigation.
11. The City Manager misled the news media and public regarding Mo Hanarkar's illegal attempted takeover of two hotels on May 2, including falsely characterizing the event as merely a business dispute after it had become far worse than that and the City had ample reason to know that Honarkar was trespassing at the hotels. The City also gave the apparently false impression that both sides in the dispute carried firearms when only Mr. Hanarkar's side did.

The City Manager's conduct has severely undermined the public's ability and right to monitor the operations of City government, which is guaranteed by the California Constitution. If for no other reason than this, she should not continue to serve as City Manager.

Sincerely,
James Grossberg, Esq.

Carol Segerstrom <otrlaguna@cox.net>

To:

- **City Council**

Please remove her, as she seems to be not representing Laguna residents, nor supporting the Laguna employees! Get rid of her!

Sent from my iPad

Nancee Swensson <njswensson@gmail.com>

To:

• **City Council**

Sun 6/11/2023 10:16 AM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Why is Laguna Beach General Plan out of compliance via every project the city is trying to approve?

So every project that requires discretionary approval, including the ones that staff claim are categorically exempt, submit comments at hearing showing that staff can't reasonably state the project is in compliance with general plan because the Plan is out of compliance.

When the city creates its Climate Action Plan. We demand that Traffic and Circulation element must be updated in order to create a Climate Action Plan that is consistent with General Plan.

Every decision of the council must show consistency with General Plan. Look at every staff report, it typically has a reference that decision is consistent with General Plan.

The amount of money being spent to hire planning staff is ridiculous, plus this staff typically hires outside consultants to do much of the heavy lifting. But the city manager has convinced council because every other city in Orange County is doing the same. We must have a city management who collaborates with the community. Who listens and doesn't lie. Right now council finds itself in the middle of horrible scandals, lawsuits, and chaos. We find ourselves in this mess because of poor judgment of an inexperienced city manager, Shoreh Dupuis

Quote from experienced city manager:

"When I see the quality of work from cities that are much larger, with as many complex issues and compare it to Laguna it's nuts!"

Do what's good for Laguna Beach Residents, hire an experienced city manager who can lead us out of our current legal dilemma, make decisions that are resident centric, do the work instead of spending tax dollars Hiring consultants. Have a general plan that is up to date and then follow that plan.

Please do the right thing for the town we love.

Regards,
Nancee swensson

Sent from my iPhone

barbara elie <barbiesbluebird@gmail.com>

Tue 6/6/2023 12:03 PM

Ms. Barbara Elie
368 Holly St
Laguna Beach

Dear Mayor Whalen and Esteemed City Council,

First I want to thank you for your hard work, and dedication to our much loved city. I read in our newspapers and see the many good environmental policies and others that you have championed, and I am grateful.

*And as an aside, I'm very happy that Peter Blake is gone. Sorry you had to deal with him!

City Manager

It seems our City Manager is not suited for our complicated city. Complicated because we have so many big city issues - in part because with so many visitors which affect safety and the environment. While I love the idea of promoting a woman to this type of job, because I believe women to be task and detail oriented. (I am myself!)

But decisions by Ms. Dupuis(sic?), seem at times reckless with regards to the present and future needs and goals of our community.

40 Years

Hard to believe I have called LB home this long! I moved here at 25, and am now 65, and think our village is going in a bit of a wrong direction with regard to the money being spent and some building decisions like the so called Artist boondoggle space in the canyon. And I know the theater was problematic but darn it, I moved to a city with a movie theater! With a balcony and it's not right that we are getting a car dealership filled with expensive trucks, not even a proper or stylish car.(I drive a fun Aqua blue 2002 Retrobird, but see that my next car *should be* electric but with **no garage** where I have lived for 30 years I don't see how)

Flre station

I felt dismay when I read about the Ti Amo site. Whoever heard of a FD that cannot accommodate ambulances?

Self accountability

The idea that our City Mgr., with her **very** high salary, tried to pressure an officer (in real time!)so she would not receive a traffic ticket shows a lack of personal responsibility. Plus wasn't she on her phone while driving? **We in California** all know what that means,

a ticket or worse, an accident because driving through town texting or talking is an accident NOT waiting to happen. You have to soberly concentrate when driving through town so you don't hit anyone and or shear off a car door that was wildly flung open wide. Let's face it, it is childish when we don't face up to our mistakes. But her phone call has been *embarrassing* for our town, and possibly illegal. At the very least, it showed poor judgement. What happened to **personal responsibility**? If any one of us gets a traffic ticket while working, or driving to/from work, it's on us, not on our employer. It *seems* she is so accustomed to spending other people's money that she thinks she doesn't have to be accountable in this area, and that is a sign that maybe she isn't right for our town. I want people who love our town as much as I do and have the ability and take the time **to think and calculate short and long term fiscal decisions, seeking the expert wisdom of others when it's not their "wheelhouse"** In other words, I don't expect one Mgr to know everything but I do expect her to know what she doesn't know and to **show** (meaning document) expert opinion before spending city dollars.

Homeless

Btw, when I moved here, there were about 5-7 known homeless. We knew the one to stay clear of. What I see and read about are multiple men exposing themselves urinating everywhere and a women waving a knife on Ocean Ave and a resident woman finding a violent man *living* in her Apt buildings' shared laundry room on Cypress Dr. It seems almost, that these outliers get more attention and funding (a shelter and food bank) ...than our artists who bring stature and beauty to our town, and are those we *want* to keep here. I do have compassion, in fact walking with a girl friend, we came upon a homeless woman sitting under the lovely Cliff St Arbor pergola; while handing her a \$20 bill, saying "buy yourself some lunch dear" she reached out purposefully to burn my friends arm with her lit cigarette. We dropped the money and ran. When we went back the \$20. was gone. My longtime *amour*, artist and educator Michael Jacques is generous to a fault and I give to the LB Food Bank as I can. But I have become wary when I walk downtown. Are we turning into another Santa Monica?

Thank you for "listening"! Sorry this got so long 😊

Respectfully,

Barbara

barbiesbluebird@gmail.com

MIKE SALVINI <salcobuilders@gmail.com>

To:

- **City Council**

Tue 6/6/2023 10:24 AM

Dear Council-members,
Please do not extend the current city managers contract. I have been a resident since 1984, and this is the worse city manager that I have seen. You have an obligation to listen to your constituents. This city manager does not represent the best interests of the city and her tenure as city manager has been shrouded in scandal, hypocrisy and over all lack of transparency. Additionally, the spending of tax payer dollars without any accountability is unacceptable. All one has to do is look at our neighboring cities, Dana Point and San Juan, see what improvements they have made in the past few years, while Laguna Beach has way too many closed business, no plans to improve the quality of life. PLEASE DO NOT EXTEND HER CONTRACT SHE NEEDS TO GO !

Best regards
Mike Salvini

Message submitted from the <Laguna Beach, CA> website.

Site Visitor Name: Dorothy
Site Visitor Email: Mossemail@aol.com

There are too many incidents to list why this City Manager has created too much chaos and drama in her short term. She seems more concerned about special interests than the residents of Laguna.

CHRISTOPH VANLEY <vanley@cox.net>

• **City Council**

Mon 6/5/2023 6:01 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Please look for someone capable of putting residents concerns first. We have lived here over 40 years and have never seen such a dysfunctional city government.

Respectfully,

Christopher and Deborah Vanley

June 5, 2023

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

Thank you for your continued service to our great city.

While you're considering to renew the City Manager's position, I hope you take a long look at some of her decisions and comments to and about city staff and citizens of

Laguna Beach. When John Pietig announced he'd be hiring a new Assistant Manager and that Shohreh Dupuis would be taking that position I was so thrilled because we'd have a woman in that seat and felt it would benefit Laguna Beach. I was excited when Shohreh announced a meeting for the residents that live in Bluebird Canyon for our safety because it's a boxed canyon. At the meeting a map was shown for evacuations, and when asked the question if they had done any research about the three evacuations that had taken place in the past in Bluebird, Shohreh answered that they were only aware of the two evacuations for the two slides in Bluebird Canyon, I had to remind them that Bluebird was evacuated during the 1993 Fire as well. They informed us that they had not done any research about past evacuations. I was a little disappointed to say the least that they had no idea how long it took to evacuate Bluebird during any of the three evacuations. When showing the evacuation routes, I notice they hadn't included Wykoff Way, when asked; Shohreh said it was private road and we could not use it, which I understand but in the past the gate leading to Flamingo has been open during evacuations for one more way to evacuate. I would think she'd want to have this information but said no.

When it was announced that John Pietig was leaving and Shohreh Dupuis would be the new City Manager I was hoping it was going to be good change. However; when I witness Shohreh interrupting Toni Iseman at several City Council Meetings I was appalled and the way she talked to her was so dismissive and rude, I couldn't believe my ears or what I was watching. Ms. Dupuis is a paid employee and should respect all the Council Members without bias. Ms. Dupuis works for The Council and the Citizen's of Laguna Beach; all Council Members should be treated with respect regardless of her opinion and if any of the Council Members have been rude to her, she should have brought it to the attention of the sitting Mayor to deal with it. There is no excuse for this behavior.

The fact the Shohreh Dupuis was allowing the New Lessee of The Hotel Laguna to receive partial permits and not submit a full plan was a big infraction, all new businesses are required to submit a full plan or concept of what they want to do as a business here in Laguna Beach, are we planning to let new business all start this way? When Toni Iseman asked about those permits, Shohreh called Toni a racist, saying that anyone that doesn't want Mo to have a permit is racist, this statement in its self is very racist and Shohreh should apologize in public for this comment. I think we can all agree that giving Mo special treatment made him think he could use armed guards to try to take back his properties when he lost them because of a deal he made which was risk on his part. This is mob type behavior and should not be tolerated. If Mo was treated like all the other contractors and business owners who have submitted full plans of

what they plan to do at the property, going through Our Planning Commission first we wouldn't have news stories of the unorganized mess that has been created.

Then there is this; Shohreh was pulled over by a Police Officer for holding her phone while driving and then told the Police Officer that she was on the phone with the Police Chief, which doesn't matter.; It is against the law to be holding a device that would

distract her from driving. We all know that several people have been killed on Coast Highway by distracted drivers, so this should have never been hidden for so long. It took months to get the information out which is the right of citizens to request and if there wasn't evidence showing her breaking the law it would have been released immediately but it wasn't. Our tax dollars were used to try and hide it, then an edited version came out, all this to hide that she broke the law then lied to the Police Officer, it is against the law to lie to a Police Officer, right! This is how our tax dollars were used to hide a crime? I think others should be looked at for this because hiding that a city official is breaking the law, is also breaking the law.

Recently our Glorious City took over the Beaches in South Laguna, fantastic. When the fire pits were removed from Aliso, I was a little shocked, yes, we have a law about no fires on the Beach but Aliso has had fire pits for 50 or more years but Shohreh Dupuis does not seem to care about our history. All it would have taken is for her to ask if we could make an exception for this one Beach and I'm sure Council would have voted for it but now to replace them will cost thousands of dollars.

At a council meeting Shohreh named citizens saying they were bullying her on NextDoor a Social Media Platform and one of them isn't even on NextDoor and wasn't at the time Shohreh said this. I searched all over NextDoor to see if this was true and it was not. There were some videos of her at a workshop but it was public, the pictures were not bad, showing what a beautiful woman, she is. Bullying I don't think so. This could lead to a lawsuit for publicly shaming citizens at a council meeting. They woman deserve an apology.

For years Ken Frank was able to negotiate a great deal with Western Waste for our city trash collection, John Pietig was also able to do it for years. Did Shohreh try to negotiate our same deal or did she just agreed to a new contract that is going to cost more for the citizens of Laguna Beach?

She never asks how we've done things in the past she only wants to do it her way. At the Workshops for Parking and for Forest Avenue, she does not allow for residence input forgetting that is how Laguna Beach was started by a group of residents that started Laguna Beautification and excepted donations to plant the Street Trees on Broadway and The Coast Highway. In the past during workshops like these citizens have donated their time and materials to help the city beautify it. Then there is the idea of selling our Library, the purchasing Ti Amo, and now she interrupts George Weiss. When will civility enter the council chambers, everyone should be respected. Thank you for your time,

Liza Interlandi Stewart, a 63 year resident.

Tyrone Borelli <alty53@me.com>

• **City Council**
Mon 6/5/2023 2:45 PM

Hello

My wife and I moved to Laguna Beach in March 1983. The first City Manager I started to pay attention to was Ken Frank. Over the years I talked to Ken often about stuff that had little to nothing to do about city business. At some point while we accidentally ran into each other during Happy Hour at Romeo Cucina he told me he was a Republican. I'm not. Never had been never will be. But he was such a nice guy that I never afterward held it against him.

As a City Manager Ken Frank was not perfect. None the less I always felt Laguna Beach was in good hands. He really care about our little seaside town.

Since Ken retired I have had a growing feeling of uneasiness about how our town has been managed. I don't want to feel this way anymore.

I know there must be another Ken Frank out there....a person with a quiet steady hand who functions without drama and who is deeply honorably.

Thank you for reading this
Tyrone and Alice Borelli

skip houston <skipoc@mac.com>

• **City Council**

Mon 6/5/2023 2:45 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

I'm urging the City Council not to renew the contract of our current City Manager. She is incompetent and has cost the taxpayers and residents of this city far too much money. She is haughty and dismissive of residents concerns and is slowly destroying Laguna Beach. We can and must do better. The majority of residents do not support her and are appalled at her lack of transparency. It is untenable for her to remain. The baggage surrounding her is a huge weight on the city and it's finances and will only grow worse. Please vote no on her contract extension and begin the search for her replacement immediately. There are more capable and trustworthy candidates out there.

Thank you
Skip Houston
Laguna Beach
cshields175@cox.net
To:

• **City Council**

Mon 6/5/2023 1:57 PM

This post says a mouthful. So many problems with the handling of our beautiful city. We need someone who cares about Laguna.

SHOULD THE CITY MANAGER BE RETAINED? The City Council will be meeting in a closed session on Tuesday, June 6, to determine if the City Manager's contract should be extended. If you have an opinion you'd like to express on this topic, call your City Council members or email them at: citycouncil@lagunabeachcity.net Calling Council members and leaving a short recorded message may prove far more effective. Possible Discussion Topics: Did the City Manager exercise good judgment in attacking four women who criticized her – publicly naming, shaming and bullying them during a City Council meeting? Would a more-seasoned City Manager have handled this in a more private fashion? Because of this verbal attack, the City is now facing a potentially expensive slander lawsuit. In defending herself because of her traffic stop, did the City Manager abuse her power, lack transparency, stonewall the body cam video information the public is entitled to, and then spend public funds for her legal counsel and a slick video production? Why is the amount of money spent on the City Manager's outside legal defense and video for the traffic stop not being released to the public? Why was there full media coverage immediately put forth at the suspiciously timed and unresolved fishy "feces" purported vandalism event? Why were there Nixel alerts, emails, press releases, social media posts all out in about three hours – all without any full-fledged police report? (A widely reported bad look for the city.) Why has the City Manager not recused herself from conducting and controlling two police investigations that she's the subject of – the traffic stop and the purported vandalism case. (After months, has anyone heard a single word about her purported vandalism case?) Ask the press - Is it right that the City Manager routinely withholds police information from the media and the public – information that often concerns public safety? Why can requests for public records take months instead of 10 days? Does it seem right that the City Manager is the only one who can select and approve of Agenda Items being discussed at City Council meetings? Why is the recent \$260,000 project to replace the promenade decks an "emergency" when it was known that the original decks would last a year and a half? Where was the planning? And why were there no bids on the construction? This is the second time decks have been the taxpayer's gift to private profit-making businesses on Forest – why aren't the private businesses paying for their own decks? The \$153,000 "emergency" replacement of cobblestones on Main Beach a year or so ago followed the exact same pattern of known problems suddenly decreed an emergency – resulting in an extremely expensive, short-term fix. Is the cover of "emergency projects" to become the new norm that eliminates public scrutiny and allows for autocratic decision-making? What has been the City Manager's participation in the secretly negotiated, extremely financially questionable Presbyterian parking structure deal, the City's attempt to potentially sell the library out from under us, and the Hotel Laguna renovation (including a Brown Act violation and enabling Mo Honarkar to continue renovations without plans, permits and inspections - in spite of five stop work orders)? What about the handling of the Hotel Laguna and 24 West hotel attacks, where Mr. Honarkar and his armed guards threatened public safety by storming the hotels and taking control of them for 17 hours? The City Manager's response: let Mr. Honarkar's attackers stay. Why weren't they arrested on the spot? Could this not be construed as

protected preferential treatment? Why was the \$2.7M Ti Amo non-fire station site hurriedly purchased without an appraisal for around \$400,000 more than a previous buyer's offer? Why was it only after the purchase that the City Manager revealed it wouldn't work as a fire station site because it was too small to also serve as an ambulance site - something that had been in planning for about two years? Why does the Ti Amo site still sit vacant after about three years because of a failure to foresee the legal conditions necessary to resell it? Why has there been no independent outside appraisal conducted on the presumed \$7M land value of the proposed Presbyterian parking structure, instead of just accepting the church's valuation? I have no question that good things have been done over the past two years - State Of The City addresses are always designed to be all about sunshine, lollipops and roses – they intentionally overlook the imperfections. But doesn't it seem that competency should be a prerequisite and that a competent City Manager earning over \$400,000 a year should be able to navigate good government and deliver great results without drama, a lack of transparency and resident exclusion? As for the "floggings," "demonizations," "witch hunting" and "ignoring the positive" that some would assert the City Manager was been subjected to – public critiques come with the territory. Feeling sorry, making excuses and trying to bury reports of poor performance don't change this backlog of issues. Ignoring these occurrences from the last two years will not make them go away – it will only subject us to the possibility that there may be more. Some potentially far worse and more costly. Now is your once in a blue moon opportunity to voice your opinions and discuss whether it's time to look for someone who has years of successful experience calmly guiding complex cities - someone with notable credentials, an even temperament, and a respect for residents, not just vested financial interests. Let your City Council members know how you feel immediately – before her June 6 review. Write to:

Jim Sweeney <jim@sweeney-laguna.com>

To:

- **City Council**

I strongly favor **not renew**ing the City Manager's contract. She is far from the best person for the job. In fact, she is, in my opinion, the worst manager the city has had in the sixty years since I moved here.

It's time for a change.

Carolyn Birnbaum <carolynbirnbaum@cox.net>

- **City Council**

Sun 6/4/2023 5:45 PM

We are writing to you as 23 year residents of Laguna Beach.

We urge you to cast a "no" vote on the contract **renew**al of the current city manager, Ms. Dupuis.

The list of controversies regarding her behavior and administrative decisions are well known. They are a threat to our community safety, as well as our economic well being. We will **not** elucidate the numerous issues, as we are certain that you have been made well aware of them by others.

Please understand that in our 23 years here, we have never made any complaints regarding the administration of our city. However, because of the gravity of this situation, we feel compelled contact you.

Carolyn & Bill Birnbaum

1025 Canyon View Drive

Sent from my iPhone
Kathleen Kane <kathleenkane@me.com>
To:

- **City Council**

Hello Bob, Sue, George, Mark and Alex,

I am writing to ask you to vote to **not renew** the employment contract for Shohreh Dupuis, City Manager. Due to the fact that you are representing the voters of Laguna Beach, I thought you would like to get the opinion of residents. This is an issue of great importance to me as the City Manager position is essential to the future of Laguna Beach.

If you want to know why I **do not** support her continuing to lead our city, please respond and I will list my reasons. I respect that you are busy and **do**n't need details if you plan to vote no on continuing Mrs. Dupuis employment.

Thank you for your dedication to your position on the city council.

Best regards,
Kathleen Kane
Laguna Beach resident since 1986
1687 Temple Hills Dr.

meg monahan <monahan.shops@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members:

When our city manager was initially hired, I was pleased that Laguna Beach had joined the small number of cities that welcomed employment of a female city manager. I assumed that since serving as the city's assistant city manager, she would be well versed in our local issues, familiar and supportive of staff, and responsive to residents. I also encouraged the council to respect the adopted pay scale in establishing her salary. I am sorry to say I have found her performance disappointing, at best.

I hope that before you complete your review, you will hear from all staff members, including public safety, regarding the performance of the city manager. Staff should be provided with complete confidentiality and anonymity in responding. The reason I suggest this is that I have heard from staff members that they are working in a very toxic work environment caused by the city manager's micromanagement and lack of personal respect for others. Our city has very high turnover and we have trouble maintaining adequate public safety staffing. (Our Quiet Zone is no longer patrolled because, I was told, we do not have enough personnel despite the profitability of ticketing.)

It's disheartening to hear this, having been a city hall employee many years ago, under Ken Frank's management. He ran a very efficient and responsive city hall. All city employees fit inside of the current city hall. It was such a great place to work that a former council member publicly expressed concern that the city must be paying employees too much because we had NO turnover. He was comforted with salary surveys of other cities.

Please perform anonymous research to find out if employees are satisfied with the jobs and if not, why not? Are they treated with respect? Are they provided with enough training? Why do we have such high turnover and difficulties retaining public safety professionals? What suggestions do city employees have to improve any outstanding issues?

Thank you,

Meg Monahan
Resident

June 5, 2023

From: Merrill Anderson

To: Sue Kempf

Mark Orgill

Alex Rounaghi

George Weiss

Bob Whelan

Re: City Manager Performance Review

The current city manager is not a good fit for Laguna Beach. Laguna Beach government is all about community engagement, transparency and accountability, and effectively managing our assets and resources. Unfortunately, the current city manager fails on all counts.

Community Engagement: Shohreh Dupuis has been repeatedly dismissive of residents' ideas and input on a wide range of projects and initiatives, at times resorting to verbal abuse. She treats the Planning Commission as an extension of her office, rather than a community resource guiding her priorities. City Council directed her to clean up the Digester building two years ago. She didn't agree with this decision and has dragged her feet in the clean-up effort.

Transparency and Accountability: The city council should immediately launch an investigation of Ms. Dupuis role in the violent attacks at the 14 West Hotel and the Hotel Laguna. The fact that she prevented the police from making any arrests (aggravated assault, theft, destruction of private property) begs the question about why. Mohammed Honaker was the clear instigator of these violent confrontations and should have been taken into custody (with others) that day. This is yet another example of Mr. Honaker receiving special treatment from Ms. Dupuis (she turned a blind eye to his unpermitted work on the Hotel Laguna, only directing her staff to rush to the hotel and retroactively issue permits – THREE TIMES!). Clearly we need an investigation under oath to best determine her accountability and possibly criminal responsibility.

Effectively Managing Assets and Resources: Ms. Dupuis creates a toxic work environment through her micro-management and confrontational style. The police department is demoralized and under-resourced due to her actions. Morale is reportedly very low and many officers have left. The 16% pay bump will likely have little long-term impact on keeping qualified officers in a toxic environment. Laguna residents safety has been compromised.

The examples cited above are the tip of the iceberg, as there are dozens of similar failures on her part. There's no amount of leadership development training or coaching that can bring Ms. Dupuis to the quality level we need. Nor is this the responsibility of Laguna taxpayers. Ms. Dupuis has done a great disservice to our city and community. We deserve better. Do not renew the city manager's contract.

Merrill Anderson, Laguna Resident and Taxpayer

Janet Bescoby <jbescoby@gmail.com>

Cc:

- McKay, Ann Marie CC
Mon 6/5/2023 11:36 AM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear Council Members,

I understand that the annual performance reviews for city personnel are being conducted soon. I would like to express my dissatisfaction with the performance of the City Manager. A few items that have been particularly concerning are as follows:

- Poor oversight of the Hotel Laguna project which allowed the developer to ignore multiple 'stop work' orders. As the hotel is considered the Crown Jewel of Laguna Beach, the plan for the hotel should be strictly supervised. Instead it has been piecemealed together with no comprehensive plan for the total project.

- Morale issues within the police department causing dangerously low staffing levels which could result in potentially dangerous situations for all residents.

- Extremely poor judgment during the confrontations at the Hotel Laguna and the 14 West boutique hotel which resulted in major disruptions to both employees and guests as well as city staff attempting to de-escalate the situation.

The people of Laguna Beach deserve better. I am sure there are many talented professionals who would be enthusiastic about interviewing for the City Manager position.

As always, thank you for the time and energy you devote to our town. I truly appreciate all of you.

Regards,

Janet Bescoby
1985 San Remo Drive
949/933-282
City Council,

I understand that the Council is reviewing City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis' agreement for renewal and is evaluating her annual performance in closed session this Tuesday, May 6th. It is my hope that the Council consider more than to do items listed in the annual Goals workshop when evaluating the CM's performance and retention.

As you are all well aware, there have been numerous issues surrounding Ms. Dupuis personal behavior and her professionally lacking management abilities, internal leadership and external relations. I can't ever remember a period in our City so rampant with constant employee and public discourse and over-all dissatisfaction of a City Manager. If it existed it was resolved by responsible Council members who understood the importance of listening to the constituents who elected them. I hope you all will listen as well.

There are so many valid concerns regarding Ms Dupuis. Just this quick dozen or so comes to mind:

1. Making unfounded public defamatory accusations against myself and three other residents in an attempt to gain public sympathy when her professional decisions were under scrutiny.
2. Sending out City press releases containing false information (Feces and Fentyal) and accusing residents (and LBLO Group on ND) of being the cause of spreading misleading information.

3. Micro-managing the police department and withholding current crime information from residents in order to protect certain individuals and the tourist industry.
4. Going around standard government processes such as land purchase without proper appraisals, rushing and withholding important information from Council during decision-making review.(Ti Amo's. Church parking structure proposal)
5. Submitting poorly written, vague and inadequate agenda items requiring high-level of questioning and research by the public and enormous amounts of time by the Council to ask/get answers. (Library for one)
6. Agenda item control not conducive to all Council members nor their ability to address public concerns and issues.
7. Public Records Act Requests (PRA) are being delayed and/or entirely ignored. I personally have had two out for months (Employee Separations update and Rutan & Tucker Legal cases/costs update) and all I am receiving is excuses about staffing from the City Clerk and ACM Gavin Curran as to fulfillment. This is a City management problem. One inquiry took 7 months to receive and only with constant staff follow up requests. This would never have occurred under the former CM John Pietig. What this does is force the public to contact the DA and file complaints against the City for withholding public information.
- 8 CM spending taxpayer dollars on legal fees over her traffic violation and blocking the public's access to public records. 5-6 months time and money wasted. CM needs to reimburse the City for her self-interest and irresponsible use of public funds.
9. Responsible for high-employee turn-over rates (2016 @ 8% to almost 17% 2022 - increasing since she's been employed), employee low morale and constant turmoil within our police force. City employees and even our police officers are not shy about their leadership experiences and concerns.
10. Conducting the employee satisfaction survey internally and overseeing its results and public information distributed. This should have been conducted as the public requested by an outside source with no CM involvement. Several employees stated it was bogus and they knew they would be targeted if they acknowledged dissatisfaction with their supervisors or City management.
11. Conducting biased and selective surveys on important City topics and the proposed permanent Promenade. Financial loss and impacts being withheld by this CM and Council in order to push it through.
12. Public disrespect shown to former Council member Toni Iseman during her term and similar behavior towards Council member George Weiss. Clear Insubordination which should not be tolerated by any Elected.
13. Anti-resident/pro-development representation has caused public distrust and the appearance of a City and Community in chaos and dysfunction.
14. CM and Fire Chief not responding to residents direct contact over property and neighborhood fire related concerns. Residents have resorted to social media to get the word out about the lack of City top staff communications on Fire Mitigation Issues. This failure to communicate is a top management problem and therefore a CM failure to serve residents.
15. City governing issues/ Lawsuits: May 2nd Honarker/Laguna Hotels and City management debacle. City lawsuits increasing relating to this debacle and CM/public

official negligence. Seems City government investigations and potential lawsuits on several issues are in our future.

I could go on and on but I believe each of you know what is going on. I know for a fact that newly elected's were well-aware of the public's CM minimal experience, poor engagement and questionable performance concerns when running for office and Mayor Whalen and MPT Kempf, you have been advised as well. Sadly, the problems aren't going away as the personality and management style of Ms. Dupuis isn't something that can change. I've personally worked under multiple City Manager's and their personalities were paramount to how well the City could function. The Council members made difficult decisions to make necessary changes. When a majority of residents express public distrust as so many public conducted surveys have shown - it's time to get serious. In my opinion, the only way to fix the City and Community problem is to release the CM from the "At Will" position and approve the contract compensation as outlined in the agreement. The Council does not need a specific reason for not renewing this agreement. Long employed ACM Gavin Curran is perfectly capable to serve as Interim City Manager or the Council could hire an Interim from outside to serve while doing a CM replacement recruitment.

Retaining Ms Dupuis as the Laguna Beach City Manager any longer would be a mistake.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MJ Abraham
LB Resident/ LBCHAT Founder
Jim Sweeney <jim@sweeney-laguna.com>
To:

• **City Council**

Mon 6/5/2023 9:05 AM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

I strongly favor not renewing the City Manager's contract. She is far from the best person for the job. In fact, she is, in my opinion, the worst manager the city has had in the sixty years since I moved here.

It's time for a change.
b.dresel@cox.net

Mon 6/5/2023 7:23 AM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

To the Council:

In your evaluation of the City Manager, please consider the following:

Ms. Dupuis has not only committed many overt acts that are cause for her termination, residents have complained over and over that she does not respond to their communication attempts.

Our last election showed that the taxpayers and voters in Laguna Beach want a say in what happens in the city. To be ignored and/or called out by name in a Council meeting demonstrates that the City Manager has no respect for the citizenry.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf.

Barbara Dresel

Brook Gold <itsallgold66@yahoo.com>

- McKay, Ann Marie CC

Sun 6/4/2023 2:22 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

I hope you will consider the residents that voted for you, enough drama and inappropriate behavior

SHOULD THE CITY MANAGER BE RETAINED? The City Council will be meeting in a closed session on Tuesday, June 6, to determine if the City Manager's contract should be extended. If you have an opinion you'd like to express on this topic, call your City Council members or email them at: citycouncil@lagunabeachcity.net Calling Council members and leaving a short recorded message may prove far more effective. Possible Discussion Topics: Did the City Manager exercise good judgment in attacking four women who criticized her – publicly naming, shaming and bullying them during a City Council meeting? Would a more-seasoned City Manager have handled this in a more private fashion? Because of this verbal attack, the City is now facing a potentially expensive slander lawsuit. In defending herself because of her traffic stop, did the City Manager abuse her power, lack transparency, stonewall the body cam video information the public is entitled to, and then spend public funds for her legal counsel and a slick video production? Why is the amount of money spent on the City Manager's outside legal defense and video for the traffic stop not being released to the public? Why was there full media coverage immediately put forth at the suspiciously timed and unresolved fishy "feces" purported vandalism event? Why were there Nixel alerts, emails, press releases, social media posts all out in about three hours – all without any full-fledged police report? (A widely reported bad look for the city.) Why has the City Manager not recused herself from conducting and controlling two police investigations that she's the subject of – the traffic stop and the purported vandalism case. (After months, has anyone heard a single word about her purported vandalism case?) Ask the press - Is it right that the City Manager routinely withholds police information from the media and the public – information that often concerns public safety? Why can requests for public records take months instead of 10 days? Does it seem right that the City Manager is the only one who can select and approve of Agenda Items being discussed at City Council meetings?

Why is the recent \$260,000 project to replace the promenade decks an “emergency” when it was known that the original decks would last a year and a half? Where was the planning? And why were there no bids on the construction? This is the second time decks have been the taxpayer’s gift to private profit-making businesses on Forest – why aren’t the private businesses paying for their own decks? The \$153,000 “emergency” replacement of cobblestones on Main Beach a year or so ago followed the exact same pattern of known problems suddenly decreed an emergency – resulting in an extremely expensive, short-term fix. Is the cover of “emergency projects” to become the new norm that eliminates public scrutiny and allows for autocratic decision-making? What has been the City Manager’s participation in the secretly negotiated, extremely financially questionable Presbyterian parking structure deal, the City’s attempt to potentially sell the library out from under us, and the Hotel Laguna renovation (including a Brown Act violation and enabling Mo Honarkar to continue renovations without plans, permits and inspections - in spite of five stop work orders)? What about the handling of the Hotel Laguna and 24 West hotel attacks, where Mr. Honarkar and his armed guards threatened public safety by storming the hotels and taking control of them for 17 hours? The City Manager’s response: let Mr. Honarkar’s attackers stay. Why weren’t they arrested on the spot? Could this not be construed as protected preferential treatment? Why was the \$2.7M Ti Amo non-fire station site hurriedly purchased without an appraisal for around \$400,000 more than a previous buyer’s offer? Why was it only after the purchase that the City Manager revealed it wouldn’t work as a fire station site because it was too small to also serve as an ambulance site - something that had been in planning for about two years? Why does the Ti Amo site still sit vacant after about three years because of a failure to foresee the legal conditions necessary to resell it? Why has there been no independent outside appraisal conducted on the presumed \$7M land value of the proposed Presbyterian parking structure, instead of just accepting the church’s valuation? I have no question that good things have been done over the past two years - State Of The City addresses are always designed to be all about sunshine, lollipops and roses – they intentionally overlook the imperfections. But doesn’t it seem that competency should be a prerequisite and that a competent City Manager earning over \$400,000 a year should be able to navigate good government and deliver great results without drama, a lack of transparency and resident exclusion? As for the “floggings,” “demonizations,” “witch hunting” and “ignoring the positive” that some would assert the City Manager was been subjected to – public critiques come with the territory. Feeling sorry, making excuses and trying to bury reports of poor performance don’t change this backlog of issues. Ignoring these occurrences from the last two years will not make them go away – it will only subject us to the possibility that there may be more. Some potentially far worse and more costly. Now is your once in a blue moon opportunity to voice your opinions and discuss whether it’s time to look for someone who has years of successful experience calmly guiding complex cities - someone with notable credentials, an even temperament, and a respect for residents, not just vested financial interests. Brook Gold - Resident

]

Regina Hartley <rbhartley1@gmail.com>

City Council
Sun 6/4/2023 12:41 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Hello Council Members,

Please carefully consider the performance or lack thereof, of our City Manager.

I feel that she does not act in the best interests of our town and is too beholden to developers, in particular, Mo Honaker. Her failure to get involved and take action when there was real danger at the hotels with armed guards was unforgivable and should be reason for immediate dismissal.

She, like our School Board, has continued the administratively top heavy practice of having too many assistants that John Pietig instituted. His predecessor, Ken Frank ran a lean operation without assistants and got the job done.

There is too much cronyism in our City government. They are wasteful of tax payer dollars and do not have the interests of the residents at heart, for example proposing a huge parking structure at 3rd St which would encumber the city with debt with no value and purchasing properties (Ti Amo restaurant) without an appraisal. Who does that kind of reckless spending?

The City Manager is in charge, it should be in charge of the work of the city. She should put the interests of tax payers ahead of her own agenda. After all, we do pay her extravagant salary and provide part of her housing for her.

Please look at her performance review with good judgment and the interest of our town in mind.

Regina Hartley
23 year Laguna Beach tax payer

Sharon Stelma <sharonstelma@gmail.com>

• **City Council**

Sun 6/4/2023 12:03 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Sent from my iPhone

She has lost the confidence of the community. Whether people agree with decisions or not, if she does not have the community's confidence it will cause a great deal of misery.

Site Visitor Name: Debbie Lewis

Site Visitor Email: Debbiewlewis@yahoo.com

I urge you to take advantage of this Performance Evaluation to replace our city manager.

We need to get this town back on track in a more positive direction.

Our current city manager has taken us backwards.

Debbie Lewis

2192 Ocean Way

Brian Wisely <brianwisely@gmail.com>

• **City Council**
Thu 6/1/2023 3:20 PM

[**NOTICE:** This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- **DO NOT CLICK** on links or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Dear City Council,

I write to you to express my opinion that you should vote "**NO**" on renewing the contract with City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis. Let's face it !!! Clearly, there are problems with her job performance.

About me: I am a 1982 LBHS Grad., a father of two LBUSD students, A husband to a LBHS grad, and a Laguna Beach homeowner and business owner, and voter. Some of you already know me. I mention my history to demonstrate that I know the local culture.

The Problems with the City Manager's performance:

First, is the mess with regard to Shohreh's cell phone, driving violation: Most of the people of Laguna Beach would have accepted an apology and admission that she "made a mistake." But what we got is obfuscation and so now there is doubt about her honesty, and transparency. And this possibly implicates other professionals in the city government.

Second, is the recent mess with the Hotel Laguna and other properties. Rather than give you my personal opinion about this I will reference what was published in last week's Laguna Beach Independent (5/26/23). In "Letters to the Editor" from MOM Laguna LLC, and Michele Monda to the full page ad paid for by Chris Catsimanes there is clear discontent about the decisions, ethics and loyalties of our acting City Manager, Shohreh Dupuis. There is the suggestion of armed and illegal conduct being tolerated because it was a "civil matter." Yet there were guns and brawls. This Police response is troubling. What sort of liability does that put the City of Laguna Beach in?

On another note:

I have twice been on the receiving end of poor police response time in the past year or two. Once I called 911 to report a homeless man who was damaging the property of my business neighbor in the early morning hours. It took 55 minutes for an officer to arrive. And secondly, about a week ago I found an Ebike in the hedge in front of my house at 5:45am. Next to the bike was a blood stained jacket and a cell phone. I called 911 and it took over an hour for

an officer to arrive. Before calling I took a walk around to see if there was an injured person lying somewhere. I reported that and suggested that the police also have a look around. It took over an hour for an officer to knock on our door regarding the matter.

As a result, I am not confident in Laguna Beach public safety for the first time.

Finally:

As your constituent, I ask that you consider whether the culture in our City Government has gone awry. The optics are bad, the publicity is bad and the rumors are bad.

To mitigate further damage, the city council can choose to ***not renew the current City Manager's contract.***

I welcome any comments or questions,
Thank you,
Brian Wisely
949-295-0715

Kathleen Kane <kathleenkane@me.com>



To:

• **City Council**

Tue 5/30/2023 4:32 PM

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of City of Laguna Beach -- **DO NOT CLICK** on links or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Hello Bob, Sue, George, Mark and Alex,

I am writing to ask you to vote to **not** renew the employment contract for Shohreh Dupuis, City Manager. Due to the fact that you are representing the voters of Laguna Beach, I thought you would like to get the opinion of residents. This is an issue of great importance to me as the City Manager position is essential to the future of Laguna Beach.

If you want to know why I do not support her continuing to lead our city, please respond and I will list my reasons. I respect that you are busy and don't need details if you plan to vote no on continuing Mrs. Dupuis employment.

Thank you for your dedication to your position on the city council.

Best regards,
Kathleen Kane
Laguna Beach resident since 1986
1687 Temple Hills Dr.